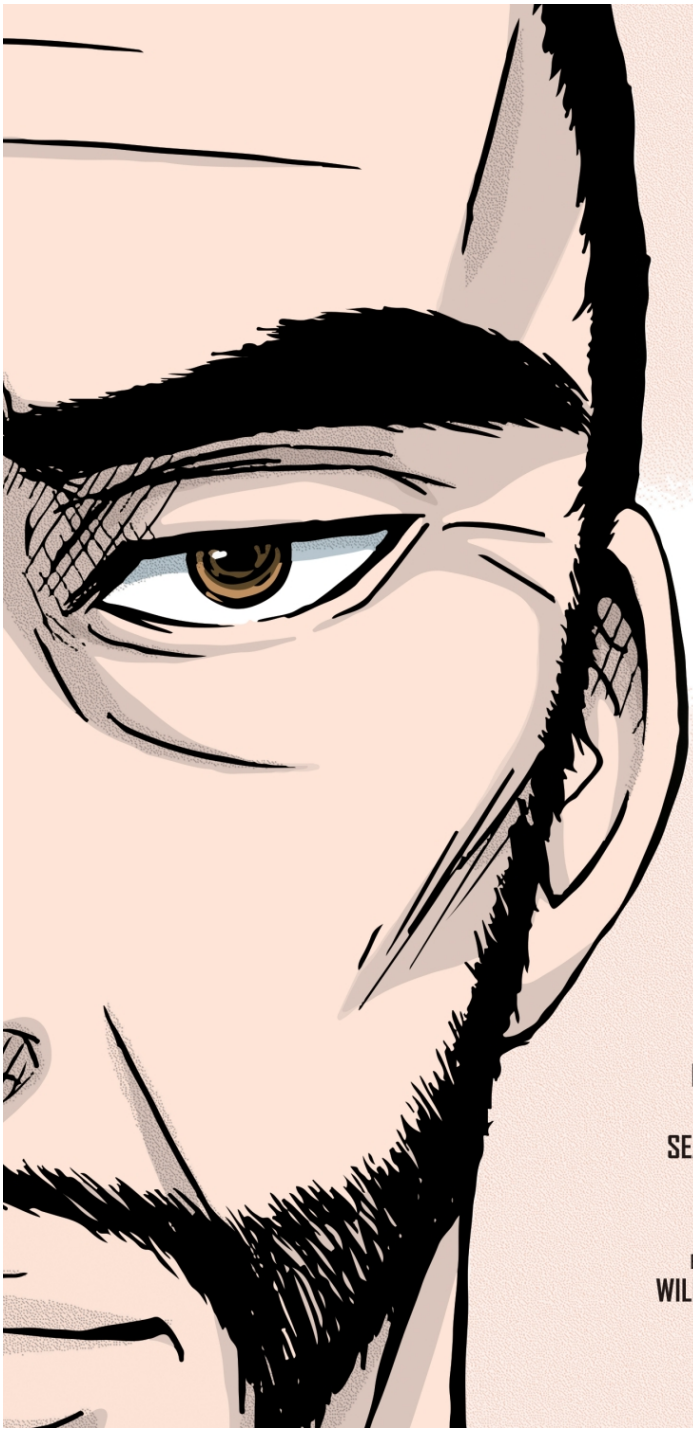

THE BOOK OF FIVE RINGS

A GRAPHIC NOVEL

FROM THE BOOK BY
MIYAMOTO MUSASHI

ADAPTED BY
SEAN MICHAEL WILSON

ILLUSTRATED BY
CHIE KUTSUWADA

BASED ON THE TRANSLATION BY
WILLIAM SCOTT WILSON

“Truly a tribute to the original [classic]. Th
of depth and insight into this work, an ex
of life (the ‘five rings’ of the title) that re
Readers get complex but eminently reada
and are led to see them all together as
enriches and broadens the life of any rea

—Jason Sacks, Comics Bulletin

“This graphic adaptation of Musashi’s se
the martial arts makes careful, effective
both the narrative and instructional as
Musashi’s lessons, in their focus on prep
easily be applied to most areas of life. Ku
clean, balancing the physiological dynam
eyed appreciation of Musashi’s natural
thoughtful update of what could be esote

—*Publishers Weekly*

ABOUT THE BOOK

This graphic novel version of *The Book o*
of confrontation and victory by the famed
and undefeated samurai Miyamoto Mus
manifesto, which has long inspired
interested in cultivating a strategic mind.
a distilled but faithful text adapted by a
Michael Wilson, *The Book of Five Rings*
to swordsmanship and strategy, and as a

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI, who lived in Ja
undefeated dueler, a masterless sam
teacher. He spent the last decades of his
military science.

SEAN MICHAEL WILSON is a comic book
has had more than a dozen books publ
and Japanese publishers, and he ofte
Chinese artists on manga-style books, su

Moon.

CHIE KUTSUWADA is a professional ma
workshops at schools, libraries, and mu
as the British Library and the Victoria a
written and illustrated *King of a Minia*
which was shortlisted in the 2007 Manga
illustrated *Hagakure*.

WILLIAM SCOTT WILSON is the foremo
traditional Japanese texts on samurai cul
from Dartmouth College and the Mo
Studies, and an MA in Japanese literary s
Washington. His best-selling books inclu
The Unfettered Mind, and *The Lone*
Miyamoto Musashi.

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A GRAPHIC NOVEL

From the book by **Miyamoto Musashi**
Based on the translation by **William Scott Wilson**
Adapted by **Sean Michael Wilson**
Illustrated by **Chie Kutsuwada**
With an Afterword by **William Scott Wilson**

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by William Scott Wilson.
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CONTENT

THE BOOK OF FIVE RINGS

Earth

Water

Fire

Wind

Emptiness

Afterword by William Scott Wilson

By the time Musashi moved to the ca
Rings, his body was feeling the effec
was sick and progressively weaker wi
a fatal disease. Nevertheless, almost
above the cave and practice for seve
moves over and over again as he lo
Dawn—from this "dojo," an outcrop
famous swordsman was well past his
meeting other men of his art in
techniques, on which he put se
established; and in the last number o
that had been pressed upon him by
were characterized by his simply
demonstrating that the latter would g

Why, then, at the end of his life, wo
in this isolated place, far away from t
Buddhist temple as his solitary neighb
When the monk Kukai returned to Ja
with him an understanding of a new, e
the Shingon, or True Word, sect. Kuka

AFT

The Meaning behind

a brilliant teacher and artist, and
Buddhism could be conveyed not in
This notion of Truth through Art had a
general, and was one of the basic a
found between the lines in every chap

Most indicative of Musashi's under
and structure of *The Book of Five R*
the assertion that the deeper esote
Vairocana, the cosmic Buddha, wh
Vairocana is manifested in a numbe
represented by the five-tiered pago
Tower of Five Rings. This tower is usu
at the bottom represents the Earth
element of physical being; next, a rou

permeation and fluidity; a triangular s
and unobstructed activity; a cresc
element, or growth and perfect aware
of a mani-jewel (wish-fulfilling gem) r
Buddhist terms, Emptiness. Thus, the
very essence of the universe.

According to Kukai, these five elem
various manifestations of the univers
this eternal interplay is impermanenc
no matter how small, large, earthly,
that, with constant meditation, these
eventually result in unification with Va

The parallels of this system with th
clear. Each chapter does indeed echo

Five Elements. One chapter cannot b

full meaning will be lost.

“See Everything for Yourself”

Do not ride another man’s horse;
Do not draw another man’s bow.

It is interesting that, while the structu
is based on an esoteric form of Budd
the very exoteric Buddhism of Zen. Or
knows water to be hot or cold unti
repeated over and over again in *The*
must investigate this thoroughly." M
teacher for any of the arts he so exc
the sword *with your hands."* And, wh
period claimed to have learned their
insisted that we must learn each
discovered it on our own. This is the
ourselves" (*issai jikan*: 一切自觀
regardless of how famous a teacher h
Book of Five Rings is only a steppin

much like the raft after one has cross

"See everything for yourself." Pr
observation, and observation witho
Musashi said, we gain real knowled
Something only half-learned or take
practitioner or puts blinders on his ga

Musashi lived for sixty years by the
Five Rings, left us with a number of
same principles. One of these paintin
underwater, perched on a small led
Musashi would have observed many
their skill and singleness of purpose.
the old Japanese saying, "The crow im

Summary of the Text

Although Musashi was heavily influen
Shingon, he could hardly be defined o

though a number of documents exis
their contradictory statements make
biographer to get a real handle on
documents continues to be his slend
was originally written down in five sho

As mentioned, Musashi was old (fo
understood that this would be his fi
each section and each word was care
summary is as follows:

In this beginning chapter, Musashi ex
he had come to know them over t
necessity of knowing the advantag
fundamental principles of using them
be practical: that partiality towards or

should know what weapon is most fi
use any weapon at hand.
Here, Musashi relates the philosoph
manship, the Niten Ichi-ryu. Include
mental attitude, body posture, use of
striking with the sword. In this chapte
to visualize the bouts in which Musas
In this chapter, Musashi writes about
combat, and develops the extrapolati
martial art. It is here that he empha
the foundation of his own martial a
martial art it is essential . . . that you
victory by twisting and distorting his m

The Earth Chapter

The Water Chapter
The Fire Chapter

The Wind Chapter
The Emptiness Chapter

Musashi firmly believed Sun Tzu's st
know yourself, you will not be endar
chapter, he exposes the failings a
swordsmanship that flourished in his
charged money to sell "performance
astray by flashy techniques that were
This chapter provides, in very few wor
four chapters. In it, we sense Musash
the summation of not only his sword
Emptiness is Existence, Existence is
great heresy. It would seem that Mus
to end his short work, similar to the

Emptiness Chapter" brings *The Book*
perfect enso, giving the work a cen
pinned down.

We may read *The Book of Five Ring*
throughout the sixty-one years of his l
number of Japanese businessmen, a
(a pitcher) in Japan who do so every y
his life and to imagine how he worke
matches of his years as a wandering s
walking away having defeated yet an
book in an attempt to grasp the mind
that few of us can equal, a man for w
nothing compared to his art, and wh
Japanese people like few others. *The*

concise statement, and, after nearly
today.

Go back now to Musashi, old and ir

still practicing the moves he had lea
observation and training. Each move
himself as his flesh and blood, and ea
art. “You must investigate this thorou
but all your life. If you can do this, you

As the thirteenth-century Zen priest
To study the Buddhist Way is to study
the self. To forget the self is to be ac
When actualized by everything in the
minds and bodies of all other selves c
—*Genjo Koan*

The seventeenth-century Zen priest
been well acquainted, added to this.
Presumably, as a martial artist, I d

concerned with strength or weakness
a step. The enemy does not see me.
a place where heaven and earth hav
have not yet arrived, I quickly and nec

The student and Musashi are on th
is *The Book of Five Rings*. What the
But the means is right there, held in h
The life of Miyamoto Musashi has
centuries. Soon after his death, imag
professional storytellers, and not lon
bunraku, kabuki, and even Noh plays.

subject of numerous movies, his pa
Chiezo Kataoka, Toshiro Mifune, Tats
great Ichikawa Raizo. Television, of c
that have been written about Mu
Yoshikawa Eiji. Written first as a ser
over four thousand pages in paperba
the fictionalized Musashi, the basis o
about the man, and has never been o
Vagabond appeared, and by the yea
volumes of the series in print.

Now, with this manga version of *T*
the first time with an artistic look int
adapted by Sean Michael Wilson, and
author by Chie Kutsuwada. To thos

Japanese culture in general, I hope t

instructive, and entertaining.

—*William Scott Wilson*

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Shambhala P

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